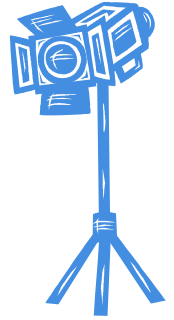


THE SENATE SPOTLIGHT



Volume 1, Issue 3

Georgia State Senate

November 2005

Senators and Staff Enjoy “Staff Appreciation Luncheon” 2005



Secretary of the Senate Frank Eldridge hosts Staff Luncheon

After an intense year that included a hugely productive legislative session and the recent special session, the staff of the Georgia State Senate took a little bit of time to relax and enjoy some great barbecue on Thursday, November 3. This year’s “Staff Appreciation Luncheon” was hosted by Secretary of the Senate Frank Eldridge, and catered by Hiram Hickory House of Hiram, GA.

“I just want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the great job that you do, and to tell you to keep up the good work,” said Sec. Eldridge, as he welcomed everyone to the luncheon and commended the staff for its commitment to the Georgia General Assembly.

Senate staffers enjoyed an afternoon complete with barbecue sandwiches, ribs, Brunswick stew and all the fixings (including some exceptional sweet tea), while Senators Dan Moody and Jeff Mullis gave impromptu speeches, lauding the Senate staff for its hard work, diligence and loyalty throughout the year. As the Senate staff enjoyed lunch, Sec. Eldridge invited everyone to test the Hiram Hickory House’s claim to the “world’s best fried pork skins.” Overall, the afternoon provided everyone with a brief respite from the everyday hustle and bustle of the Georgia Senate.



The Senate Spotlight on Senate Study Committees

JOINT COASTAL GEORGIA SOUND SCIENCE INITIATIVE STUDY COMMITTEE

The Joint Coastal Georgia Sound Science Initiative Study Committee met twice to examine the results of the Sound Science Initiative; a seven-year, \$17 million study addressing concerns that pumping of groundwater in the region is allowing saltwater to seep into the Upper Floridian drinking water aquifer. The Committee is set to meet again in Atlanta on November 21. It is still unclear if any legislation or a report will be created.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIVATIZATION STUDY COMMITTEE

The Environmental Privatization Study Committee, chaired by Sen. Casey Cagle, met in Atlanta on November 4. Presentations from the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) provided information about the agency's success with enlisting the private sector in EPD management and delivery of environmental protection programs. It is still unclear if any legislation or a report will be created from this committee.

JOINT PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS in STATE-FUNDED HEALTH CARE PLANS

This Study Committee, chaired by Majority Leader Tommie Williams and Representative Earl Ehrhart, met on September 9. The Committee heard from the Department of Community Health (DCH) on various issues that could possibly be addressed by the DCH without requiring legislation. It is unclear if any legislation or a report will be created by the Committee.

EMINENT DOMAIN STUDY COMMITTEE

The Study Committee may convene for one more meeting to hear and consider recommendations for legislation. It is unclear at this time whether the Committee will propose new legislation or amend Senate Bill 86.

JOINT COMMITTEE on LIQUID NATURAL GAS

The Study Committee expects to convene once more in December to hear reports from the Advisory Committee and the Sub-Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is currently working on potential legislation, but members are having difficulty reaching consensus on the potential language. The next meeting for the Advisory Committee is November 21.

PUBLIC DEFENDERS LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT STUDY COMMITTEE

The Oversight Committee will meet on December 13, for what is expected to be its last meeting this year. The Public Defenders Standards Council will present their standards for final ratification and for determination of fiscal impact. A report citing the expected fiscal impact will be provided to the General Assembly.

HOME HEATING FUELS STUDY COMMITTEE

The Study Committee met Thursday, November 10, to hear testimony from home heating marketers and providers. This will likely be the last meeting of the Study Committee, which is chaired by Sen. Mitch Seabaugh. It is not expected to present legislation.

COMMISSION on the GEORGIA HEALTH INSURANCE RISK POOL

Chaired by Richard S. Novack, the Commission on the Georgia Health Insurance Risk Pool is studying the feasibility of establishing an insurance pool for individuals with high-risk health conditions such as AIDS, diabetes and cancer. Such a risk pool would allow individuals who have been denied traditional health insurance because of a pre-existing condition to buy into the pool. The Commission held meetings on August 9, September 12 and October 11.

INVERSE CONDEMNATION STUDY COMMITTEE

The Senate Inverse Condemnation Study Committee, chaired by Sen. Chip Pearson, has held four meetings throughout the State, most recently on November 1. The Committee does not anticipate holding another meeting, and intends to release a final report and to possibly suggest legislation prior to the 2006 legislative session.

TREE ORDINANCE STUDY COMMITTEE

The Senate Tree Ordinance Study Committee, chaired by Sen. Chip Pearson, held its first meeting on September 28. The Committee is charged with examining county and municipal ordinances that prohibit homeowners from trimming or cutting trees on their property. The Committee has not determined whether to hold another meeting, or to issue a final report citing its findings.

ATLANTA COUNTY/MILTON COUNTY STUDY COMMITTEE

Chaired by Senators Dan Moody and Sam Zamarripa, the Senate Atlanta County and Milton County Study Committee is examining the future of Fulton County and whether it should be separated into two counties, consolidated into one city/county government such as Athens-Clarke County, become fully incorporated or remain as it exists today. The Committee plans to hold its third and final meeting on December 6.

The Senate Spotlight focuses on IT Director Scott Henry



It is with great enthusiasm that we introduce the new Director of the Georgia General Assembly's IT Division, Scott Henry. Many of you have had the pleasure of working with Scott as we have migrated to the new computer system. He has been with the project since its conception, and he is highly qualified to lead our IT team successfully. Scott comes to the General Assembly from Novacoast Inc., who performed the initial security analysis of our network. Scott is from Minneapolis, MN, and he is happy to become a part of the General Assembly.

By now, you have noticed the changes taking place in your office, including state-of-the-art computer equipment and our new and improved IT office. Many of you may have also just completed your training for Word, Excel and the new email system, Microsoft Outlook. For some, the transition to the new computer system has been a daunting task. If you need assistance when you are dealing with any part of our new system, Director Henry invites you to give the IT division a call. They are here to help you!



The Spotlight also welcomes...

Jeremy Arie, *Communications Specialist, Senate Information Office*. Jeremy has been an aide to the General Assembly for the last two legislative sessions. He is a graduate of Georgia State University, and has resided in Atlanta for over 20 years. Jeremy has replaced Misty Harris Holcomb, who has moved on to a position with the Department of Corrections.

Tim Bentley, *Director of Communications, State Senate*. Tim comes to the Senate with more than 10 years of experience in the communications field, including a stint as Governor Zell Miller's press secretary. For the last four years, he ran his own communications company. Tim is from Atlanta, GA.

Rick Gardner, *General Government/Fiscal Management Analyst, Senate Budget Office*. Rick comes to the Senate as a graduate of Georgia Tech, and he has previously worked in pre-law advisement at Tech. Rick is from Tyrone, GA, and he replaces Billy Peppers, who has moved on to work with the City of Woodstock.

Terry Long, *Deputy Legislative Counsel, Office of Legislative Counsel*. Terry graduated from Georgia State University College of Law in 1988, and she comes to the General Assembly from the Department of Public Safety, where she served as the Deputy Director of Legal Services. Terry also served as an Assistant Attorney General from 1988-1995.

Glenn Morrison, *Editor, Office of Legislative Counsel*. Glenn is a University of Georgia alumnus from Atlanta, GA. He previously worked in the private sector in the IT field.

Jenny Spratt, *Computer Terminal Operator, Office of Legislative Counsel*. Jenny is returning to Legislative Counsel after working in that office in a temporary capacity for more than eight years. She is also from Atlanta, GA.

Shawn Marie Story, *Assistant Legislative Counsel, Office of Legislative Counsel*. Shawn Marie is another new attorney joining the Office of Legislative Counsel, bringing with her over 12 years experience in civil defense litigation. She is from Thomasville, GA.

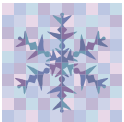
Senate Budget's Spotlight on...Monthly Numbers



The revenue collected by the Department of Revenue for October 2005 was \$1.3 billion. This is an increase of 10.4 percent when compared to the revenue collected in October 2004 (\$1.2b).

For the first four months of the 2005 state fiscal year, state revenues were \$4.7 billion and for the same period of the 2006 fiscal year, revenues were \$5.2 billion, a 9.4 percent increase.

The impact from the suspension of the State Motor Fuel Taxes after Hurricane Katrina was estimated to be \$66 million. The actual decrease as compared to October 2004 was \$56 million. Motor fuel taxes account for 4.5 percent of all revenue collected by the Department of Revenue.



Mark your calendars...

On Wednesday, December 7, 2005, Senators Eric Johnson, Tommie Williams and Robert Brown will host a Potluck Holiday Luncheon. Senators and staff are encouraged to drop by the Senate Information Office sometime soon, or send email to kristina.graves@senate.ga.gov, to let us know what type of side dish you plan to bring. The luncheon will happen at noon in room 307 COB and all are welcome!



Don't forget...

On Tuesday, November 1, 2005, Governor **Sonny Perdue** officially kicked off the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots 2005 season. Please participate by bringing a new unwrapped toy and placing it in the collection bin in the lobby of the Twin Towers. You can also drop off your toy(s) in the Governor's Office in the State Capitol.



Also, remember this year's Christmas tree-lighting ceremony will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 4, 2005, at the Governor's Mansion at 391 West Paces Ferry Road Atlanta, GA 30305. Guests are invited to tour the Governor's Mansion on that evening from 6:00-9:00 p.m. as well.

The Senate Spotlight on...Bob Ewing



What is your current job and/or assignments?

I have served as the Assistant Secretary of the Senate since 1992. One of my major responsibilities is ensuring that the Senate Journal is published and the information is accurate and complete. I also must constantly keep up with the Senate rules, and be able to cite or reference a rule upon request in the rare situation that the Secretary of the Senate is unavailable. I handle these assignments along with assisting in the everyday operation of the Secretary's office.

How did you end up at the General Assembly?

I was working at a resort in New Hampshire that was located on Golden Pond, and a friend of mine who worked a few sessions here told me how much he was enjoying his job with the Georgia General Assembly. I moved here in December of 1978, and I have

been with the General Assembly ever since. Since then, I have served during the tenures of Governors Sonny Perdue, Roy Barnes, Zell Miller, Joe Frank Harris and George Busbee

We know you have a great family – tell us about them!

I have two great children! My daughter Jessica is 19 and she attends Auburn University. Her freshman year GPA was a 3.7. My son Benjamin attends Pace Academy in Atlanta, and he recently received a lacrosse and academic scholarship from Presbyterian College in South Carolina. Benjamin also plays varsity soccer at Pace. I am incredibly proud of them both.

What is something you would like to accomplish in the next 10 years?

Professionally, I would like to work with the Office of the Secretary of the Senate to make all of the work of our office complete, accurate and accessible to the general public. We want to explore fine tuning our local legislation process by linking to the Reapportionment Office's database to determine in a more precise fashion which political subdivisions are affected by local bills and resolutions. Most of all, I want to help to make the Senators' jobs easier and more seamless. Personally, I would like to see my neighborhood, Avondale Estates, grow and develop in a responsible, controlled fashion. I have resided in Avondale Estates for 15 years now.

Tell me a little about your background. Birthplace, brothers and sisters, etc.

Well, my mother resides in Bay Minnette, Alabama, and my sister and her family live in Mobile, AL. My sister runs the Red Cross division out of Mobile. Needless to say, she's had her hands full this year, assisting the victims of Hurricane Katrina. I think that in many ways that tragic event has affected the lives of every American. I am from the Northeast originally. I went to college at Franklin and Marshall in Pennsylvania, and before that I attended the Kent School. I have lived in Georgia for nearly 30 years now, and I think it is a beautiful state!

Favorite ways to spend time away from work?

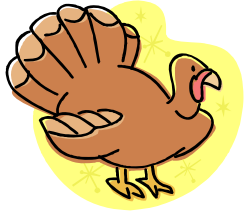
I am very active in my community, where I serve as Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Board for the City of Avondale Estates. I love my neighborhood and I want to see it grow and improve, but it needs to happen in a responsible and tasteful way. I really enjoy the outdoors – fishing, camping, hiking, gardening, tennis and squash. Basically, I enjoy most hobbies that involve being outside in the sun. I also enjoy spending quality time with my children.

The General Assembly can be an exciting place to work. What are some of the aspects of your position that you enjoy the most?

One of my greatest joys in serving the Georgia General Assembly has been the opportunity to offer young people a chance to develop a strong, professional work ethic by working in our office. Many of these people have moved on to important careers in state government and in the private sector. It has been an awesome privilege to be a positive influence on the careers of so many young professionals. I feel lucky to have the opportunity to meet and/or work alongside the many people that come to the Secretary of the Senate's office.



The Senate Spotlight . . . November Birthdays



Happy Birthday to . . .



Senator Joseph Carter
Senator John Douglas
Senator Ralph Hudgens
Senator Brian Kemp
Senator Dan Moody
Senator Chip Pearson
Senator Preston Smith
Carmen Alexander- Senate Secretary
Merri Brantley- Senate Information
Kathleen Cominski- Senate Secretary
Jill Fike- Senate Research
Laurie Sparks- Senate Secretary
Jenny Spratt- Legislative Counsel
Patsy Turner- Legislative Counsel

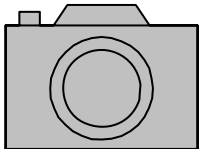
November 26th
November 7th
November 21st
November 2nd
November 7th
November 28th
November 11th
November 14th
November 3rd
November 18th
November 3rd
November 14th
November 2nd
November 9th

Happy Belated Birthday to:

Bridgette Holsey- IT Division
Brian Hurst- IT Division
Thomas Wynn- IT Division

October 7th
October 21st
October 25th

The Senate Spotlight...FYI



The Senate Photographer's office has recently moved to Room 202 in the Paul D. Coverdell Legislative Office Building. Please drop by any time to say hello to Senate Photographer Tyna Duckett in her new office. Tyna can also be reached at her new extension at **404-656-0025**.

The Senate Spotlight is a product of the Senate Information Office. If you have a suggestion or a person you would like to be considered for the Senate Spotlight on Employees, please contact us at 404.656.0028.